

October 9, 1985

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MEMORANDUM FOR: P -Mr. Michael Schneider

THROUGH: P/D - John Mosher

FROM: P/DH - Saul S. Geffer *SSG*

SUBJECT: Afghan Media Project Update

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The SIG Meeting on Afghanistan Political Strategy, August 1, 1985, chaired by Under Secretary of State Michael Armacost, established an Interagency Working Group, chaired by Stanton Burnett (C), to decide an action plan to carry out the congressional mandate to "promote an independent Afghan media service" and to "train Afghans in media and media related areas". Subsequently, an Intra-agency group was formed under the direction of John Mosher (P/D) to manage the Afghan Media Project.

The working group conducted extensive fact-finding interviews with informed individuals in and out of government on the question of media coverage of Afghanistan.

The Counselor's Office prepared a concept paper (classified SECRET), "Afghanistan and the Media."

USIA published an announcement in the Federal Register (August 26, 1985) soliciting concept papers from the private sector to carry out the Afghan Media Project.

USIA sought and received authorization from Congress to make these grants under either Smith-Mundt or Fulbright-Hays authority.

USIA engaged John O. Koehler, Koehler International, Ltd. (retired Assistant General Manager and Managing Director, World Services Division, the Associated Press) to travel to Europe and to Pakistan to assess the media situation regarding Afghanistan.

The Afghan Media Staff (hereafter referred to as P/DH) was established in the Office of Program Coordination and Development (P/D), and Senior Foreign Service Officer Saul S. Geffer was assigned as Program Manager.

P/DH occupied its offices at 400 6th Street, SW, Suite 1651 (phone 485-6973).

P/DH has received briefings from various members of the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the National Security Council.

Mr. Koehler returned from his fact-finding tour, and on September 30, 1985 briefed an interagency meeting in the Director's office, and has presented his draft report to the Agency.

In response to the notice in the Federal Register, P/DH received 18 concept papers by the deadline of midnight, September 25, 1985. Two other concept papers, so far, have arrived after the deadline.

P/DH established a panel to evaluate the concept papers. The panel is composed of the following voting and non-voting members:

- NEA - James P. Thurber
- E - Robert Smith
- P/P - C. B. Groce
- TV - Robert Butler
- VOA - Robert Chatten
- D/S - Ronald Post
- Mr. David Nalle (IEE)
- GC - Merry Lynn (non-voting)
- M/K - Phillip Rogers (non-voting)

P/DH has planned a briefing for the evaluation panel on October 15, 1985, and it is anticipated that the panel will meet on or about, October 22, 1985 to discuss the papers, after which the panel will make recommendations to USIA in line with the goals and objectives of the project. Applicants recommended by the evaluation panel will be invited to submit grant proposals within 30 days, after which the panel will conduct a review of the proposals and make recommendations.

P/DH is preparing an interim report to Congress as required in the legislation which established the Afghan Media Project.

cc: - C Stanton Burnett  
NEA - James P. Thurber  
GC - Thomas Harvey  
P - Mary Ellen Connell

Drafted: P/DH: RHoagland  
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**AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT: RELATED DOCUMENTS**

1. Congressional Record, Federal Register, and Congressional letter.
2. SIG/WORKING GROUP ON AFGHANISTAN - Prepared by the Counselor's Office.
3. Update to the Director from Stanton Burnett.
4. Initial public reaction/Press Guidance for the Director.
5. Memo from John Mosher summarizing his initial set-up of the Afghan Media Project.
6. Fact-finding tour to Pakistan by John O. Koehler:
  - a. Consultant's Statement of Work
  - b. Bio data.
  - c. Reports by Obee from Islamabad
  - d. Memoranda of conversation: Mr. Koehler's briefing.
7. Weekly reports from P/DH.
8. List of concept papers received/guidance from GC.
9. Afghan Media Project Grant Evaluation Panel.
10. Talking points for Acting Director's meeting with Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), Dr. Fred Ikle.